

# The Jewish *Gaily* *Forward*

"Transcend the Ordinary"

Elul 5779 - Kislev 5780 / September 2019 - November 2019

## Environmental Justice Group

By MIRIAM MENZEL and PAUL BENDIX

Faced with a global climate emergency, Sha'ar Zahav is leveraging our strengths as a congregation and as individuals to take action.

The Environmental Justice Group has been meeting monthly to develop a three-way approach.

First, boost awareness of how each of us can live more sustainably. Watch for bulletin board displays at Sha'ar Zahav. We will encourage drashes and articles that explain how individual behavior affects the planet.

Second, engage and inform the congregation as a whole. A planned energy audit will target improved sustainability in operating our building. Folks need to know that all waste at oneg is now compostable, thanks to a new congregational policy and the support of our staff. We hope to establish twice yearly Green Shabbats to inspire deepened appreciation of Creation, and its celebration in our liturgy. We will research and encourage divestment of congregational funds from fossil fuels.

Third, forge alliances. A global problem demands a global solution. We will partner with other groups doing similar work. We will broaden collaboration with diverse ethnic, cultural and religious groups, perhaps to include other synagogues. Let's empower our shul to publicly defend our Earth. Facing such a fundamental threat to our global quality of life, we can easily feel overwhelmed and dispirited. Jews have faced this predicament for millennia. We know that faith means persevering even without knowing the outcome, and being in community strengthens our faith. We hope to explore this experience at future Green Shabbats.

The Environmental Justice Group usually meets on the second Tuesday of the month. Check the Sha'ar Zahav calendar for details.

*"It is not up to you to finish the work, yet you are not free to avoid it."*

-Rabbi Tarfon, *Pirke Avot*

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## Transparency And Torah

By RABBI MYCHAL COPELAND



The High Holy Days approach. Haunting music. A clean slate for the New Year. Time to contemplate. Many wait for this sacred time to roll around every year, but it's not for everyone. As we enter the Yamim Noraim season, I am acutely aware that services don't carry the same meaning for our

entire community. And, sadly, many carry around a fair amount of guilt as a result.

I cannot pinpoint the moment in our history when Jews started to feel that the mark of being connected to Jewish community was attending services. We had long defined ourselves as much more than a religion: Judaism is a people, a civilization, a culture, an ethical system, a way of walking through the world.

Yet over time, in response to historical and cultural phenomena, our definition became narrower. The result is that guilty look I know so well as people tell me they don't come to services. I get it. It's not for everyone. But being involved with a Jewish community or being spiritually fulfilled is not dependent on prayer. Even the

prophet Isaiah, from our Yom Kippur reading, might agree; for him, religious ritual is meaningless if not accompanied by freeing the oppressed.

If any of this resonates with you, this is my invitation: come to the High Holy Days anyway. This time of year is an annual gift of reconnection, and much of what brings us meaning happens outside the sanctuary. So come for the onegs to talk with old friends and commiserate over the tsuris (troubles) of the past year.

Come for the Yom Kippur afternoon break-outs: yoga, study, art, a walk through the city. Come for the conversation in the foyer (just as sacred as what is happening inside the sanctuary). Let Isaiah's words inspire you to commit to one action that will improve our world in honor of this auspicious time of year. Greet and hand out prayerbooks - a perfect role for people who don't want to go inside but want to meet everyone.

Help set up our break-the-fast (especially if you don't fast, this is a gift to those who do). Picnic at Crissy Field and cast your symbolic wrongdoings at tashlich. You can dump your guilt over not liking services into the Bay.

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## Point of Entry

By CANTOR SHARON BERNSTEIN



At the beginning of the Amidah, there is a short prayer: Adonai s'fatai tiftach u-fi yagid t'hilatecha – Adonai, open my lips that my mouth may declare your glory.

It's a way of saying: God, please help me to pray. An acknowledgment, smack at the opening to the central

prayer of each service, that prayer isn't something that we can just . . . do. It's something in which we need help.

Prayer, in some form, is endemic to human nature, but that doesn't mean it comes easily. One of the words for prayer is avodah, which, in the context of prayer, is usually defined as "service of the heart," but which, in other contexts, literally means "work." I like the "work" definition applied to prayer. In that vein, prayer feels more active, more concrete, something that can grow and flourish within us as we tend to it with intention, study, and, as with everything, practice.

But practice here doesn't make perfect; rather, prayer is something uncertain.

There's no formula for having a transcendental experience. Yes, we have ancient words, and instructions and rules for standing here, bowing there and doing things this or that way. Augmented, of course, by many arguments for just how one is supposed to do it (we're Jewish, after all). But that doesn't guarantee any particular experience we might be hoping for.

Part of that is because, I think, that we don't really know what to hope for. It's an elusive thing, this idea of what prayer is supposed to feel like. It's something that is different for each of us. And something that we somehow expect to get "right," even while not knowing what "right" is.

That's where asking for help comes in. The asking is a point of entry, a way of getting started, of opening not just our lips, but our vulnerable selves to possibility. It's saying: I don't know how to do this, and I don't know what's going to happen here, but I'm going to enter and see what happens, see what blooms in the moment.

Rather amazing flowerings can result. Shana tova um'tukah, wishing us all a year of immensely sweet blooming moments – in prayer and everywhere that we might meet the divine.

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The Jewish Gaily Forward is published four times a year by Sha'ar Zahav: September, December, March, and June. The deadline for submissions is 45 days prior to the publication date: July 15th, October 15th, January 15th, and April 15th. All submissions to the JGF must meet editorial requirements and length requirements.

Specifications supplied upon request.

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## Safe Space - Then And Now

By NANCY LEVIN, President



We recently celebrated Daniel Chesir, one of our founders who, in 1977, listed an ad for gay Jews looking for services.

Daniel has said, "After our whole lives of being scorned by other synagogues and often by our families, we wanted a Jewish community where we could

celebrate our lives and relationships." Sha'ar Zahav was born, and with it, the stone that was rejected became the cornerstone.

We became a safe, welcoming space for Jewish queer folks and friends. And we also "rolled up our sleeves" – setting up one of the very first blood drives during the AIDS crisis and bringing folks a bit of joy through "Megillah Madness" celebrations; creating a prayer book that spoke to us and others around the world; inspiring 14 members to become rabbis and cantors

Forty-two years later, gay Jews are not "scorned" at Bay Area synagogues. But that's not true for many transgender Jews, Jews of color, Jews in interfaith relationships, poor Jews, and refugees. What does it mean, today, to welcome others and create a space that affirms the sacred in every one of us?

It means that our racial diversity work group is having 1:1 meetings with Jews of color in Bay Area, hosting a monthly Jews of color Shabbat dinner, and organizing a teen panel of Jews of color.

It means creating separate spaces (and sushi nights!) for our millennials to socialize and engage with a Jewish tradition that speaks to their lives.

It means living our Jewish values of inspiring justice, equity, and compassion through the actions of our social action, emergency housing, or environmental justice/climate working groups.

It means engaging with local faith leaders for Nightwalks through the Mission, and volunteering at the Gubbio Project to feed and clothe our homeless neighbors.

It means creating a safe space for chemically-sensitive people who can get extremely ill from fragrances and scents.

Sadly, it also means having to grapple with physical safety in the face of rising threats, especially towards Jews and LGBTQ people, by

"What does it mean, today, to welcome others and create a space that affirms the sacred in every one of us?"

- NANCY LEVIN

increasing our awareness and preparedness, upgrading building features and forging mutually-supportive relationships with our neighbors.

And finally, it means having a membership commitment model that allows everyone to be in community, regardless of finances.

So, yes, we're here, with our sleeves still rolled up. Creating space for all of us on a spiritual journey, and in a Jewish community, that honors you for who you are, as you are.

## From The Maker's Space

By ANDRÉA GUERRA

This past year, Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer (BSPM) saw some exciting changes. Thanks to Sue Bojdak's leadership, our educational experimentation through I\*Express (See the December JGF Issue for more information), a fabulous roster of teachers, and an engaged student body, the building was rocking with activity on Shabbat mornings.

The creation of the Maker's Space is a part of that transformation and expands on the idea of innovative thinking. The classroom across from the oneg room is now a space where students explore, in conjunction with their classroom teachers, Jewish themes and ideas in a creative and interpretive way. It is a center of Jewish experiential tinkering, of exploration and experimentation.

Materials play a part in the dance of curiosity, inventiveness and playfulness in the Maker's Space. The BSPM community donated an abundance of materials (thank you!!), adding to this environment where creativity hums as the ideas begin to flow. During the year, the BSPM students examined different themes.

In learning about what it means to be a Jewish hero, one cohort created the Jewish Hero Sandwich Board and practiced lettering as they made a list of ingredients/Jewish values from which to make a Hero Sandwich. Students explored Jewish ritual items, making their own kiddush cups, chanukias, and Birkat Habayit (blessings for the home), as well as creating their own rituals. The

year culminated in a joint effort to both create the parts and build the Tower of Babel as part of a unit on language. It was an amazing experience!

**"The creation of the Maker's Space is a part of that transformation and expands on the idea of innovative thinking."**

- ANDRÉA GUERRA

The Maker's Space is not just an experience for the grade school student. This past year, we held an adult Shabbaton - a gratifying, hands-on afternoon of exploration into the world of Hebrew stamp-making and unexpected discoveries with wax-resistant watercolor painting and Breishit (the story of Creation).

As we move into the new year, may we find opportunities to spend time together in the Maker's Space, where we move our Jewish learning into doing, where we find ourselves thinking through our tinkering, playing with ideas, materials and each other. I hope to see you there.

## Welcome Our New and Returning Members!

### June

Samuel Lowinger  
Alyss Weissglass

### July

Janaye Murphy

### August

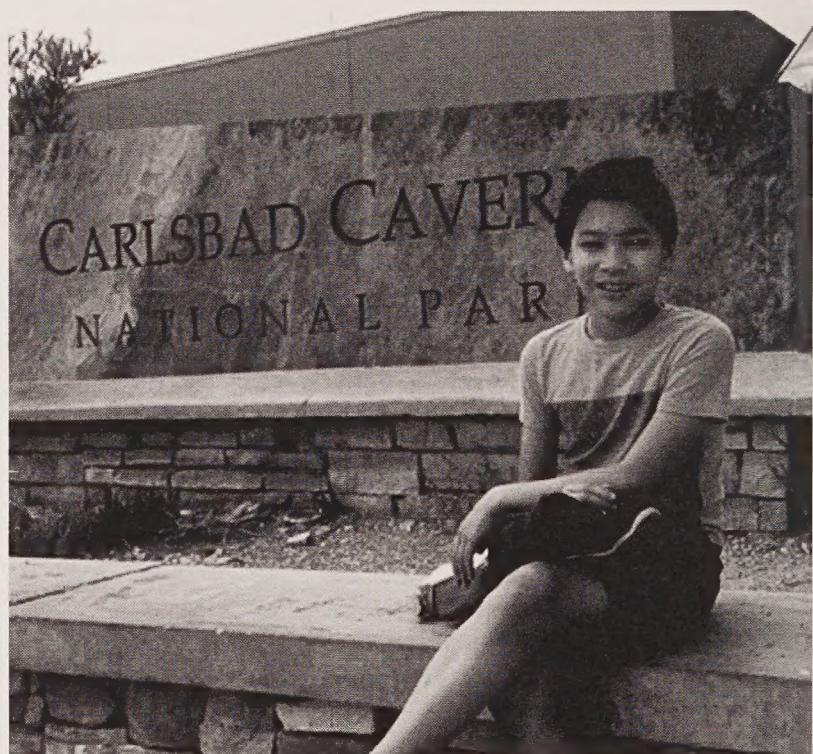
Carey Averbook  
Marjorie Sturm & Ernesto Diaz-Infante  
(plus their kids, Ezra & Shoshana Strum)

## Spencer Gabriel Fischer

Spencer Gabriel Fischer, son of Don Fischer and grandson of Charlotte Fischer, will be called to the Torah as a bar mitzvah on November 9. Spence, as he prefers to be called, is a 7th grader at the Spanish Infusion School in the Castro. Spence embraces two cultures: his native Vietnamese as well as his Jewish community.

Spence enjoys playing Roblox, Minecraft, and occasionally chess, as well as working with model trains. He's also especially adept at graphic design and fixing things at home.

His favorite food is mac and cheese, and his favorite movie is Spirited Away. He is also very fond of Dexter, Arthur Slepian and Gerry Llamado's dog. Spence has been preparing for bar mitzvah with Laura Lowe and his Hebrew tutor, Clara Mickowski.



## Shawn M. Matloob



I was born in Tehran, Iran. My paternal grandfather was the principal of the first Jewish school in Tehran. When I was 14, I left my parents and escaped to Pakistan. I spent a year both there and in Austria, thanks to HIAS and my uncle and

his wife in Los Angeles. Soon after, I immigrated to the US as a Jewish refugee. In 1993, I moved to Berkeley and graduated with BA in Political Science and Near Eastern Studies at UC Berkeley. I then attended UC Hastings Law School in San Francisco with a concentration in International Law.

Since 1999, I've had the privilege of working and volunteering as an Immigration Attorney in the Bay Area, helping other refugees and immigrants like myself and my family. I have volunteered with both the Jewish Community Relations Council and Jewish Film Festival for many years.

I enjoy living in Berkeley while working in San Francisco. I was honored to be asked to give my only drash at SZ for Purim in 2018, and I have thoroughly enjoyed attending Friday night services and other events.

Allan Berenstein (and his son Matt and daughter-in-law Ashley) on the birth of his granddaughter (and their second child), Lainey Berenstein.

Patricia Lin on election to a two-year term as an at-large member of the Assembly of the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco.

SHA'AR ZAHAV / CONDOLENCES

**May**

**Richard Gilbert Sousa,**  
beloved father of Beth Sousa  
**Monty Bersinski,**  
brother-in-law of Irene Oguis

**June**

**David Katz,**  
beloved brother of Rose Katz

**July**

**Brian Mailman,**  
beloved husband of Stephen McNeil  
**Jack Lewis Ludwig,**  
beloved father of Gail Ludwig,  
father-in-law of Clarissa Kripke  
and grandfather of Rachel Ludwig-Kripke

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**May 17-18**

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**Julie Mamet and Judy Mamet**  
in honor of Anshel Mamet's b'nei mitzvah

**Kiddush Luncheon sponsored by Judy Mamet**  
in honor of Anshel Mamet's b'nei mitzvah

**May 24-25**

**Flowers sponsored by Richard Meyerson**  
in memory of his father, Stan Meyerson  
**Oneg sponsored by Alice Harron**  
in memory of her father, Meyer Jacob Harron

**May 31-June 1**

**Oneg sponsored by Marius Greenspan**  
in memory of his mother, Evelyn Greenspan

**June 6-7**

**Flowers sponsored by Paul Cohen**  
in memory of Esther and Sanford Fischer

**June 14-15**

**Oneg sponsored by**  
**James Carlson and Marc Lipschutz**  
in celebration of their retirement  
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**Irene Oguis and Suzie Langdon**  
in honor of David Langdon's bar mitzvah

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in celebration of David Langdon's bar mitzvah

**June 28-29**

**Flowers sponsored anonymously**  
in loving memory of our members  
and friends who have died from AIDS

**July 12-13**

**Flowers sponsored by Ann Bauman**  
in celebration of Kelly Thiemann's bat mitzvah  
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**Drew Parker-Rose and Flavio Epstein**  
in appreciation for our time at Sha'ar Zahav and  
in loving memory of Drew's mother, Arlene Parker

**Kiddush Luncheon sponsored by Ann Bauman**  
in celebration of Kelly Thiemann's bat mitzvah

**July 26-27**

**Oneg sponsored by Allan Gold and Alan Ferrara**  
in celebration of the 20th wedding anniversary

**August 9**

**Oneg sponsored by Geri Kahn**  
in memory of her mother, Sandra Kahn

**August 16-17**

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in memory of Richard Sousa and David Katz

Joel &amp; Susan Friedman

in memory of Richard Sousa

Alice Harron

in memory of David Katz and Richard Sousa

Rose Katz

in memory of David Katz

and in appreciation for the Oneg Committee

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in honor of Kelly Thiemann

Mark Mackler &amp; Wendell Choo

in memory of Bobbi Schiller

Steven Mazer

in memory of Richard Sousa

Harriet Rafter

in honor of Kelly Thiemann

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in honor of Rabbi Copeland and Cantor Bernstein

Arthur Slepian &amp; Gerry Llamado

Beth Sousa

in appreciation for the amazing supportive  
spirit of Sha'ar Zahav

and in honor of Nathan Robinson

Michael Tyler, Amy Schustack and Scott Kramer

in honor of Kelly Thiemann's bat mitzvah

Ami Zusman

in memory of David Katz

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on behalf of Avigdor & Neilda Jean Sussace  
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in memory of her brother, Rick Farkas

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Jo Ellen Kaiser

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in memory of my mother, Evelyn Greenspan

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Laura Lowe

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## SHA'AR ZAHAV / YAHRZEITS

### September

9/1	John Golebowski
9/3	Lee Gierson
9/5	Bernard Pechter
9/6	Elliot Klein
9/18	Penny Dachinger
9/20	Edward Wolberg
9/24	Mike Rankin
9/25	Jeffrey Lewis Cohen

### October

10/3	David Pierce
10/6	Jeffrey A. Miller
10/12	Andrew Zysman
10/13	Harry Clint Bigglestone
10/18	Henry Mautner
10/18	Rabbi Benjamin Marcus
10/24	Glenn Murray Miller
10/29	Michael Mohr
10/29	Duane Kearns Puryear

### November

11/3	Forrest Kincade
11/7	Donald Albert
11/11	Sidney Rosenthal
11/11	Bruce Apter
11/14	Richard D. Wright
11/14	Harvey Levine
11/16	Chuck Norton
11/22	Tristano Palermino
11/27	Harvey Milk
11/29	William David Holt II

## Recipe from Laureen Kim

ONEG CHAVURAH VOLUNTEER



As delicious as are cakes, cookies, trifles and kugels that highlight the oneg tables after Friday evening services, our volunteers strive to have at least one savory item.

A regular favorite are Laureen Kim's "stuffed mushrooms" and we are pleased to share her recipe:

### Stuffed Mushrooms

30 Large Button Mushrooms  
2 Tbsp Chopped Garlic  
Salt to taste  
Pepper to taste  
8 oz. cream cheese at room temperature  
1/4 c. breadcrumbs (she uses gluten free panko)  
1/4 c. parmesan cheese  
2 Tbsp. finely chopped parsley

De-stem mushrooms. Chop stems. Fry stems with garlic. Add salt and pepper. Cook on medium high heat for 6-8 minutes. Remove from heat. Add cream cheese and bread crumbs. Add more salt and pepper if needed. Stuff mushroom caps with mixture. Sprinkle with parmesan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Garnish with parsley and serve warm or at room temperature



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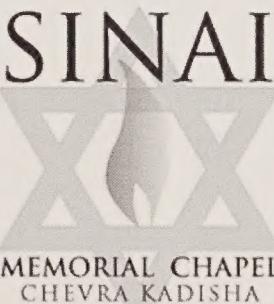
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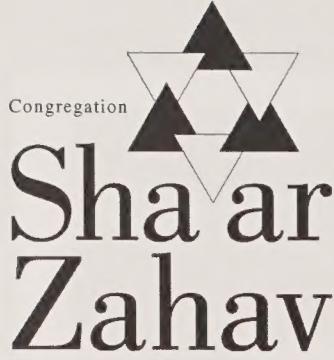
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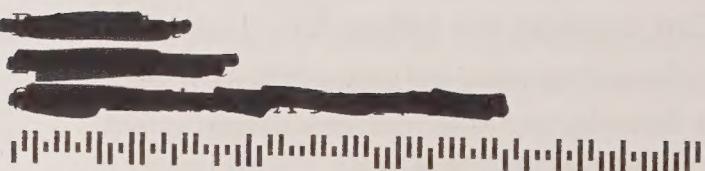
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## HIGH HOLY DAY Services:

*High Holy Day Services are  
held in the Herbst Theater.*

For complete listing of  
all services and child care  
information, please visit:  
[www.shaarzahav.org](http://www.shaarzahav.org).

### Selichot Saturday

Sept 21, 8 pm

### ROSH HASHANAH:

**Sunday, September 29**

7:30 pm Erev Rosh Hashanah

**Monday, September 30**

9:30 am Rosh Hashanah Services

**Tuesday, October 1**

9:30 am Second Day Rosh Hashanah Services,  
at Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores Street

### YOM KIPPUR:

**Tuesday, October 8**

7:30 pm Erev Yom Kippur/Kol Nidre Service

**Wednesday, October 9**

9:30 am Morning Service

1:30 pm Mincha Service

2:30 pm Niggun Service

3:30 pm Study Sessions

5:30 pm Yizkor and Neilah

7:30 pm Break-the-Fast